

PRESS RELEASE

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Tom Wittmann and Brian Coughren of Seattle Safety, LLC Named SBA Small Business Exporters of the Year

Celebration honoring winners on April 29th - Marion Oliver McCaw Hall, Seattle Center

SEATTLE – The U.S. Small Business Administration's Seattle District Office has named **Thomas Wittmann, President and Brian Coughren, Vice-President** as the **2008 Washington State & Region 10 (WA, OR, ID, AK) Small Business Exporters of the Year**. Seattle Safety, LLC is one of the world's leading engineering design, production and installation suppliers of crash safety sleds. They are dedicated to producing high quality, high performance sled testing and lighting systems targeted at automotive restraint system and aircraft seat suppliers.

Wittmann and Coughren started their company, Seattle Safety LLC, to continue innovative work in crash safety after the two mechanical engineers left the Boeing Commercial Aircraft Corporation in 1996. The company offers precision crash test catapults to aerospace customers, and has expanded into the automotive market. Seattle Safety also produces floodlighting systems; and sells and integrates camera outriggers, data acquisition systems, dummies, transducers, and high-speed video. Additionally, the company can create full turnkey laboratory systems.

Seattle Safety started out with just the two co-owners, but now has grown to 30 employees. In ten years, it has become one of the world's leading engineering design, production and installation suppliers of crash safety sleds. It produces high-quality, high-performance sled testing and lighting systems for automotive restraint system developers and aircraft seat suppliers. Its products are built almost exclusively in the USA, primarily in Seattle, contributing to American job creation.

Seattle Safety LLC has domestic sales, but primarily exports its systems to Canada, Italy, Japan, France, Taiwan, South Korea, China, Brazil and the United Kingdom. To market overseas, it makes numerous sales trips annually; exhibits at crash safety-focused trade shows; and has experienced sales and technical support arrangements with representatives in foreign countries.

On export trade orders, the common elapsed time of 10-14 months between receipt of a product purchase order to the completed product installation can cause project cash flow problems. So to help smooth out the funding flow issues, Seattle Safety has benefited from a number of SBA Export Working Capital Program loan guarantees ranging from \$500,000 to as high as \$1 million dollars processed through Mr. Michael Lum, Vice President with Washington First International Bank located in Seattle .

The ServoSled reverse acceleration catapult sled systems and Decelerator sled systems are Seattle Safety's primary products. The ServoSled is only a fraction of the size of competing systems and features self-correcting close-looped controls that monitor acceleration, track a target pulse, and adjust in real-time to reduce or eliminate practice tests. The Decelerator sled system with its use of compressed air to bring the sled up to speed and its ending bar energy absorber to stop the sled per the desired deceleration profile can reproduce most automotive impact pulse shapes, and is primarily used for aircraft seat, child seat, automotive compliance testing, and automotive side impact.

To accomplish the delivery of turnkey lab systems, Seattle Safety combines items produced by them and by associated American companies that make other critical lab components. This encourages more companies to expand into export markets through their involvement with Seattle Safety in joint export project development. Seattle Safety is currently pursuing the creation of crash safety service testing facilities in Japan and China. Some of the lab operation personnel will come from existing USA operations, thus providing overseas employment for American workers.

By designing and producing industry-leading, user-friendly products that result in satisfied foreign customers and an expanding global customer base, Seattle Safety LLC's industry market share has grown to over 50 percent of the world market. As SBA's 2008 Small Business Exporters of Year, Tom Wittmann and Brian Coughren serve as a model of export success.

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